

Calcium



Why do we need it?

- ◆ To make (and keep) bones and teeth strong
- ◆ For proper nerve and muscle function

Where do we get it?

The **best source** of calcium in our diets comes from dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese. Some vegetables, such as spinach, contain natural calcium, too. However, the body is not very good at using some of these sources of calcium. Calcium is now being added to many foods you can buy. These *calcium-fortified* foods include orange juice and some cereals. If you have trouble drinking milk, these foods may be a good alternative for you.

How much is enough?

The Dietary Reference Intakes or DRI s are recommended intakes for individuals. The DRI for calcium is as follows:

Age (years)	Calcium Recommendation (mg/day)	
	Males	Females
1-3	500	500
4-8	800	800
9-18	1300	1300
19-50	1000	1000
51+	1200	1200
Pregnant/breastfeeding <18 years of age	--	1300
Pregnant/breastfeeding >18 years of age	--	1000

The Food Guide Pyramid recommends 2-3 servings from the milk group each day (this recommendation applies to children, also). Look at food labels for information on the amount of calcium in that food.

What counts as a serving from the milk group?

One serving of the milk group is based on the amount of calcium in 1 cup of milk. The following table offers sample servings for common milk foods.

For this amount of food...	Count as this many servings of milk
1 cup milk or yogurt (8 ounces)	1
1 cup soy-based beverage, calcium fortified	1
1 ½ ounces natural cheese	1
2 ounces processed cheese	1
1 string cheese (1 ounce)	2/3
½ cup cottage cheese	¼
½ cup ice cream	1/3
½ cup frozen yogurt	½
½ cup pudding	½

Because they drink milk, most children tend to get enough calcium. However, as they get older, consumption of milk and dairy products decreases. Therefore, it is important to emphasize milk consumption as part of a regular diet for kids. Teenagers, especially teenage girls, begin to drink less milk and more carbonated and other beverages.

What about Calcium supplements?

If your calcium intake is consistently lower than the recommended amounts, ask your doctor about taking calcium supplements. Calcium in food, however, is better absorbed than calcium from a pill. Try to increase your intake of calcium-rich foods and you'll get other nutrients at the same time.

Kids and adults will love this tasty treat!

Creamsicle Shake*		
Servings: 4		
Amount	Measure	Ingredient
2	cups	reduced-fat (2%) milk
1	cup	vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt
1	6 oz. Can	frozen orange juice concentrate
1/4	cup	sugar
1/4	tsp.	orange extract (optional)
Procedure:		
1. Combine all ingredients in blender and blend until smooth.		
Nutrient analysis (per serving): Calories 256, Carbohydrates 42.7g, Protein 6.5g, fat 6.6g, Saturated fat 4.0g, Vitamin C 58.7mg, Vitamin A 367 I U, Calcium 188.7mg		
Food Guide Pyramid: 1/2 serving milk group		
*Recipe submitted by: Cecilia Schuster, teacher, Bethany CT		